The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor throughout the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE— BILLION DOLLARS IN WAR SAVINGS BONDS FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1676 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 25, 1943 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 33, NO. 21

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Eloquence is an attribute possessed not only by trained and experienced orators. We learned that at the magnificent rally put on in Constitution Hall in the nation's capital by the Washington Central Labor Union.

We saw a young man named James Kaiser walk haltingly up to the microphone, blinking in the glare of the spotlights and obviously ill at ease at first facing the huge crowd. This youth before the war worked as an AFL union carpenter in Youngstown, O. After joining the air force, he saw action and plenty of it in Asia and in Africa and acquitted himself so well that he was decorated for outstanding heroism. You could see just by looking at him that Lieut. Kaiser would have preferred facing the enemy in a dog-fight high in the clouds to making a speech. But he faced the music and started talking and in a few moments we all forgot his nervousness in our absorption with the interesting anecdotes he was relating from his thrill-packed experiences.

"The road to victory may be long," Lieut. Kaiser summed up, "but we've proved we can travel—the Army and labor together. We fliers have found that American workmen really know their stuff. We know from experience with it that the Flying Fortress is a real, AFL product."

The Hero of Guadalcanal

Another immensely effective speaker was Sergt. Al Schmid, of the U. S. Marines. Schmid is a Philadelphia boy who also served as an AFL worker before Pearl Harbor. Now he is one of the nation's great heroes as a result of his fighting exploits at Guadalcanal. He is also blind.

As he stood before the microphone, staring at the audience with his sightless eyes, he didn't have to say a word. The lines of suffering in his face spoke volumes. To tell the truth, we were so impressed by the gallant humor in his voice when he did start talking that we neglected to take notes on his message. The gist of it, however, was that we on the home front have no cause to complain, that our hardships would be considered heaven by the men in the foxholes.

There was one group on the platform who made no speeches. They sat impassively through the program and near its end they were trundled en masse to the audience by Master of Ceremonies Thomas Mitchell, the stage, screen and radio star.

They were a motley group, these final heroes. They were no uniform. Four were whites and two Negroes. Some were clad in neat business suits, others in dungarees and work shirts. The youngest one in the group had an arm encased in a cast from shoulder to fingertips. Each of them, an uninformed stranger would detect no glamor. But to us they appeared more daring, more noteworthy and more heroic than any of the glamorous personalities who made the headlines the next day.

These were the men who have gone down into the sea with American ships, torpedoed by the enemy submarine and still coming back for more. These were the men who are sailing vital supplies from America's arsenal of democracy to the fighting fronts regardless of personal danger. These were the men in whom performance of duty has brought no medals.

The Heroes of the Sea

Far off in a remote balcony another sailor looked down at them with eyes full of pride. He was Harry Lundeberg, President of the International Seafarers' Union. These were his men on the platform, loyal members of his union, loyal citizens of a great democracy.

We sought out Harry Lundeberg in the balcony and talked to him. He had quite a story to tell. More than 2,500 members of the International Seafarers Union, he said, already are casualties of the war, killed or wounded in the service of their country. Thousands more have been torpedoed and saved unscathed.

"Our boys don't mind that part of it so much," said Harry. "They know how to take it. But they would like to get some recognition for what they are doing. They would like the American people to know and appreciate what the life of American seamen on the high seas these days is just as tough as that of the soldiers facing the enemy on the battlefronts. It's hard to go through what a lot of these boys have gone through and then be sneered at as slackers."

No one is going to call Charles Reed a slacker to his face. Reed was one of the seamen on the platform. He's been torpedoed twice in the war and fought and not as young as he used to be. He's been torpedoed four times in this war and once in the last. Only recently, he was shot down in the South Atlantic, he spent 45 days in an open boat with a few mates before being rescued. All they had to eat was canned corned beef, and it was "as hard as this chair I'm sitting on."

We asked Reed what his future plans were. He said:

"I'm going to have a helluva good time while my dough holds out. That'll be about two weeks. Then I'm going to ship out again."

Brothers, that's heroism in my book!

AFL Workers Aid To War Effort Hailed At Huge Patriotic Rally

Washington, D. C.—It was a great night for American workers.

Never before since the war began have the efforts of AFL workers to help win the war come in for such long-overdue praise from those in high office and members of our armed forces.

It all happened at a huge patriotic rally held in Constitution Hall in the nation's capital under the auspices of the Washington Central Labor Union.

AFL President William Green set the keynote for the proceedings with the ringing declaration that the six million members of the Federation will go on working for victory, come what may, until the enemies of freedom and democracy surrender unconditionally. He was cheered to the echo.

War Manpower Commissioner McNutt brought to the meeting the "personal felicitations, warm greetings and best wishes" of the President of the United States.

Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson left a dinner for Prime Minister Winston Churchill at the British Embassy to come to the meeting and deliver an address which captured the hearts of the audience. He said:

"There is only one spirit evident here—a determination to keep our sleeves rolled up, a determination to keep the production lines rolling, a determination to win the war.

"My friend, Mr. William Green, has pledged that the six million workers of the American Federation of Labor will never let down the men on the battlefronts. I congratulate him and his associates on the Federation's Executive Council."

At the very start of the rally a service flag was raised with appropriate ceremonies in honor of the more than a million young men who are members of the AFL now serving in the nation's armed forces.

Some of these boys, who have come back from the battlefronts acclaimed as national heroes, provided the big punch of the rally. Prominent among the long list of heroes presented to the audience were Sergt. Al Schmid, a Philadelphia AFL worker, who went to Guadalcanal as a Marine and killed many Japs before he was blinded, and Lieut. James Kaiser, of the Army Air Force, who once served as an AFL carpenter in Youngstown, O., before becoming a hero of airfights in Asia and Africa.

Not to mention, but very much in the picture, were six members of the International Seafarers' Union who have been torpedoed several times but are still determined to go on sailing the nation's merchant ships at any hazard.

Other outstanding heroes who brought forth cheers from the crowd included Sergt. Barney Iba, with the U. S. Marines, Capt. John Mattson, of the merchant marine, and Lt. Col. Ian McAlpin of the British Commandos.

Rear Admiral Woodward, chief of the Navy's Service Division, declared that "miracle" was the only word to describe the production achievements of AFL workers and added that without their help Rommel "never could have been licked as soon as he was."

The Future Of The War Labor Board

Washington, D. C.—Text of the AFL Executive Council's statement on the wage policies of the War Labor Board follows:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor believes that the present status of the National War Labor Board, as to the Board's powers, is in direct conflict with the agreement reached by Labor, Industry and Government when the Board was originally established. The Council believes also that the continued usefulness of the Board, as a vital instrument in our efforts to maintain production of war materials, is seriously impaired.

"Under the agreement of December, 1941 all labor disputes, regardless of the issues involved, were to be settled for the duration of the war by peaceful means, through adjustment, registered in democratic fashion, of a tri-partite War Labor Board on which workers, employers and the public were to be represented. It was understood that this democratic procedure has been modified to a large extent by the exercise of delegated executive authority which has frozen the Little Steel Formula on our wage system without regard to high living costs and other patent injustices.

"While the unworkable Executive decree of April 8th, known as Executive Order 9328, has been modified and clarified under date of May 12th, Labor is not yet satisfied that the workers of the country who are producing the weapons of warfare can secure fair treatment under this modification.

"The Executive Council is in complete accord with the efforts of the American Federation of Labor members on the Board to formulate a wage policy which would be fair and equitable and which would be administratively possible. The Council realizes that sufficient time has not elapsed to evaluate the results which are now the result of the recent modification of the Order of April 8th and has therefore requested its members on the War Labor Board to carefully estimate the effect of recent Executive Orders on Board policy as reflected in the decisions which the Board will make in the near future.

"The Executive Council expects our members on the Board to continue their efforts to have the Board function with all the power originally agreed to when the Board was established. The Executive Council believes that on the answers to the problems presented herein depends the future existence of this Board, which the Council considers had done up to April 8th a splendid job in its efforts to stabilize our wartime economy."

Executive Council Demands New Stabilization Policy; Renews Efforts To Obtain No-Raiding Truce With CIO; Mine Workers Union Asks Re-Affiliation With AFL

The Kaiser Case And The NLRB

Washington, D. C.—Excerpts from the AFL Executive Council's declaration on the Kaiser shipyard case instituted by the CIO and NLRB follow:

For several years the American Federation of Labor has been urging certain clarifying amendments to the National Labor Relations Act which will serve to eliminate some of the Labor Board's vast discretion. The action of the Board in proceeding against the Kaiser Shipbuilding Company, at the behest of the CIO, in an effort to invalidate the union shop agreement between the Kaiser Shipyards and the International Unions affiliated with the Metal Trades Department, furnishes final and conclusive proof of the need for amendments removing the Board's discretion and chastening its powers.

Henry J. Kaiser is well known as one of the most enlightened and progressive pro-labor employers in the country. When he embarked upon the new and vital war enterprise of shipbuilding he followed his usual policy of entering into a contract with the bona fide labor organization which was, admittedly, the dominant union in that locality representing shipbuilding workers. This was not only done in complete good faith, it was done with governmental participation and approval. The result of the joinder of Kaiser's genius for organization with labor's enthusiastic cooperation has been the most remarkable record of production achievement ever witnessed the world over.

The Act was designed to prevent unfair labor practices of anti-union employers. The Act was not designed to persecute employers having a pro-labor record such as Henry Kaiser's, and no one can contend that his labor practices or policies are the kind that prompted the enactment of the Wagner Act.

Further, the ultimate objective of the Act is the achievement of industrial stability through the making of collective bargaining agreements with bona fide labor organizations. That stability has been achieved under the existing agreement between the Kaiser Shipyards and the International Unions affiliated with the Metal Trades Department, and in addition the International Unions of Carpenters and Joiners and the Teamsters and the Painters, who have made a wage pact jointly with the Metal Trades Department. The result of thus stabilizing industrial relations in those shipyards is seen in the miraculous records established and being established in the production of war vessels so vitally essential to the tasks ahead.

Recently, the House Committee on Naval Affairs undertook an extensive investigation of the operation of the union shop in private shipbuilding companies on the West Coast. In a report filed February 15, 1943, the full Committee recommended that "all standing closed-shop agreements with recognized labor organizations be frozen for the duration of the war." This was done in the face of the fact that the stabilized labor conditions found to exist on the West Coast were "due primarily to the fact that there exists on the West Coast, after many conferences between the shipbuilders, the unions, and the Government, what is known as a Master Agreement which has done much to stabilize and minimize labor difficulties."

From the foregoing it is evident that the action of the Board in proceeding against Mr. Henry Kaiser's shipyards and seeking to invalidate a union shop agreement is directly contrary to the fundamental purposes of the Act and constitutes a perversion of its objectives. In fact, under this proceeding the Board sponsors the very results which it is the purpose of the Act to avoid.

The immediate result of the Board's action is to open wide the door to attempted raids by rival organizations. An inter-union fight is not only precipitated but is invited; and the stabilization of industrial relations among the West Coast shipyards which has permitted the utmost possible contribution to the war effort will be destroyed.

The action of the Board, the CIO, to harass and penalize a pro-labor employer, and to seriously disrupt the war production of an employer world-famous for his records, and to abrogate labor agreements which have in large part made those records possible, is, at worst, an instance of unjustifiable unfair and partisan espousal of the CIO, and, at best, is an instance of a government agency obsessed with a dangerously narrow and legalistic approach.

The Board's action in attacking the union shop agreement would be reprehensible enough in time of peace; in time of war it is all but treasonable. No other organization has the right to represent the employees of the Kaiser Company, and the net result sought by the Board is purely a negative one of eliminating the present bargaining representative.

Apologists and spokesmen for the Board have sought to explain its incredible actions on the ground that it had no alternative—that it was charged with an explicit Congressional mandate to proceed against and set aside any closed-shop agreement made under the circumstances of this case, namely, before a majority of the full complement of employes had designated the contracting labor union as their collective bargaining agent. The answer is that this simply is not true.

Congress deliberately refrained from imposing upon the Board a positive duty to proceed in any, much less in every case. It merely authorized the Board to proceed or not to proceed in any case, by providing that "The Board shall have power to issue a complaint." Congress did this precisely for the reason of preventing a distortion of the Board's purposes and large objectives of the Act by undue and unrealistic reliance upon subsidiary detail.

A few days ago the Board offered to withdraw its suit against the Kaiser Shipbuilding Company if the American Federation of Labor and the Company would agree to abrogate the union shop provision. As well might Hitler say he will end the war if the Allies agree to give up the Atlantic Charter. The very thing which the American Federation of Labor is fighting to retain in this case is the union shop agreement which has operated so constructively to achieve stabilization, eliminate jurisdictional strife and promote labor-management cooperation.

The Board's "offer" is nothing more than an invitation to accept defeat without a struggle. Surrender by the Board the objectives sought in the proceedings against the Kaiser Company, namely, to permit the CIO, in alliance with the Board, to carry out its raiding policies, without the necessity of holding hearings or trying the issues, and without being afforded a right to court review.

Indeed, in view of the Board's offer and in view of the Board's previous statements, it is apparent that the holding of hearings are a mere formality and the entire proceedings before the Board a farce. The Board clearly indicated that it had already adjudicated the issues and that the case is already predecided against the contentions of the Company and the American Federation of Labor.

The American Federation of Labor strongly and actively supports the efforts which have been made by the Metal Trades Department and the other International Unions acting with it, in resisting the wholly unjustified industrial policies which the National Labor Relations Board is applying in the Kaiser and other similar cases.

If the raiding tactics of the CIO would assist in greater production of ships, then it might be contended that raiding is justified as a war production policy. When such raiding creates doubt, confusion, discord and animosities in shipyards, then raiding is wholly and unjustifiable as an instigation and stimulation of such raiding by a federal agency is most reprehensible.

The American Federation of Labor previously presented amendments to the Wagner Act creating the National Labor Relations Board, some of which need to be reviewed in the light of recent developments.

The Board's policy in the Kaiser case is evidence of the necessity for the immediate passage of proper amendments. It also makes it incumbent upon the Board, in the interests of war production, immediately to reverse this case.

The Board's advocacy of the open shop, as it has done in measured and detailed terms, if carried into effect would demoralize the industrial relationships which have been established through collective bargaining and unreasonably interfere with the existing cooperation between management and organized employes.

For these and other vital reasons the American Federation of Labor strongly urges Congress immediately to enact proper amendments to the Wagner Act prepared by our organization.

Committee Will Consider Application Of U.M.W. For Return To AFL

Washington, D. C. — The United Mine Workers of America has formally applied for re-affiliation with the American Federation of Labor.

The application was made in a letter sent by John L. Lewis, President of the union, to the Executive Council of the AFL meeting in the nation's capital.

The Executive Council authorized President William Green to appoint a committee of three members to take up the matter and the various problems of jurisdiction involved and report back to the next meeting of the council.

Those appointed by President Green to serve on this committee were Vice President Daniel J. Tobin, chairman; and Vice Presidents George M. Harrison and Matthew Woll.

The committee is expected to discuss the matter with Lewis and investigate all the circumstances very carefully before reporting back to the Executive Council. Unless a special meeting of the council is called, this report could not be considered until the council's August session.

The application of the United Mine Workers Union came as something of a surprise and occasioned a great deal of wild speculation and surmise in the press.

Mr. Lewis in his letter said he thought re-affiliation would be a step toward labor unity and President Green said at a press conference that the application would be given sympathetic attention with that objective in mind.

The United Mine Workers Union was the original nucleus of the CIO defection from the AFL in 1935. The union was suspended from the AFL in 1936 and its charter was revoked in 1938. Since then it has taken jurisdiction in several fields where existing AFL unions operate. Also, the AFL has chartered the Progressive Mine Workers Union and given it the jurisdiction formerly held by the U. M. W.

NEW OPPOSITION SEEN TO CONNALLY-SMITH BILL

Washington, D. C.—Strong Republican opposition to the obnoxious Connally-Smith anti-labor bill is developing in the House of Representatives which is due to consider the measure on June 2. Rep. Hamilton Fish of New York, one of the leaders in the fight against the bill, expressed his attitude in the following telegram to one of his constituents:

"I have faith in the patriotism of labor and am a strong advocate of collective bargaining and freedom of speech in war and in peace and see no necessity at the present time for the enactment of coercive legislation such as the Connally-Smith Bill in view of the no-strike pledge of organized labor."

Wire or write your Congressman before June 2 urging him to vote against this dangerous measure!

AFL To Fight State Anti-Labor Laws

Washington, D. C. — The AFL Executive Council issued the following statement of its plans to challenge the validity of State anti-labor legislation:

"The Executive Council, after studying a legal analysis of anti-labor legislation adopted in the States of Arkansas, Kansas, South Dakota, Idaho, Texas and Colorado, has come to the inescapable conclusion that these measures are clearly unconstitutional and repugnant to American principles of freedom and democracy.

"Therefore, the Executive Council directs that the officers of the American Federation of Labor take whatever steps are necessary to test the validity of these State laws in the courts as far as may be required.

"We commend the action of President Green in advising State Federations of Labor to refrain from local unions in these States to refrain from complying with these oppressive laws until the courts have ruled upon them.

"The evidence is clear that reactionary groups—notably the Christian American Association—have simultaneously sponsored anti-labor legislation of this nature in State legislatures throughout the land with the obvious purpose of depriving American workers and their labor unions of their rights under the Constitution.

"The provisions of the laws adopted in the six States above mentioned

Rollback of Prices To May, 1942, Levels And Restoration of WLB's Powers Over Wages Called For

Washington, D. C.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor called upon the Government to adopt practical, common-sense policies on wages and food prices to promote the effective prosecution of the war.

Declaring that the War Labor Board had done "a splendid job in its efforts to stabilize our wartime economy" up to the Executive Order of April 8, the Council demanded that the Board's former powers be restored so that it can continue to function effectively.

At the same time, the Council proposed a two-point program for curbing food prices back to May, 1942 levels and keeping them there. This is the only sound way to make price control effective, end profiteering, wipe out black market operations and eliminate artificial food shortages, the Council said.

Other outstanding actions taken by the Executive Council at the closing sessions of its Spring session included:

1—It directed that peace negotiations with the CIO be resumed at the earliest possible opportunity with the objective of reaching a clear-cut no-raiding truce.

2—It demanded amendment of the National Labor Relations Act to cure maladministration of the law as evidenced in the NLRB proceedings against the Kaiser shipyards.

3—It authorized immediate court actions to test the validity of anti-labor laws adopted in six States which were found to be clearly unconstitutional.

4—It received a report from Sir William Beveridge to the effect that his famous social security plan will be adopted in Great Britain and an accompanying report from President William Green that the AFL's new social security program would be submitted to Congress in the form of a specific bill very soon.

After concluding its business, the Council decided to hold its next meeting in Chicago during the month of August.

One of the highlights of the council meeting was the receipt of an application from the United Mine Workers seeking re-affiliation of that union with the American Federation of Labor. A committee made up of Vice Presidents Tobin, Harrison and Woll will look into the matter and report back to the Council at its next meeting.

The Council devoted most of its time to the consideration of serious economic problems developing from the administration of the nation's stabilization program.

It found that prompt action is vital to relieve American workers from an "insufferable squeeze" resulting from wage freezing on the one hand and skyrocketing price increases for the necessities of life on the other.

War workers, upon whose strength and morale success of the war effort primarily depends, are protesting all over the country against being victimized, the Council warned.

Price Control A Complete Flop

Washington, D. C.—Text of the Executive Council's vigorous denunciation of OPA policies follows:

"The price control program with regard to foodstuffs has broken down. The rackets, the gambling, half-hearted efforts of the Office of Price Administration to keep food prices in check have resulted in almost complete failure.

"Despite repeated promises, there has been no sincere and effective attempt to roll back prices to a reasonable level. Instead, the Office of Price Administration has created confusion and chaos in the nation's food markets by a continuous series of complicated and contradictory rulings which have made a mockery of price control.

"In fact, the giddy policies of the Office of Price Administration have made it impossible for producers to create artificial food shortages in basic commodities and to reap unconscionable profits through black market operations.

"Indeed, the OPA complains tearfully that it is powerless to enforce price ceilings and to suppress the black market with its limited staff. But this agency has no one to blame but itself for failure. Its timid, piece-meal and ineffectual attack on the problem encourages law evasion and price profiteering.

"One of the most outrageous surrenders on the part of OPA to cheaters and price-gougers was its official abandonment of grade-labeling. This necessary device for the protection of consumers was originally a basic policy of OPA. But this agency did not possess the character and courage to defend its own convictions and the public interest. Bringing in the face of criticism from selfish interests and their Congressional spokesmen, the OPA meekly gave up without a fight.

"The result obviously will be deterioration of the quality of canned goods purchased by the public along with higher prices.

"The Executive Council is firmly of the opinion that the time has come to call a halt to the farcical performances of the OPA. The workers of America, whose wage income has been stabilized within narrow limits, are protesting all over the country against being victimized. These men and women, upon whose strength and morale the success of the nation's war effort primarily depends, have been caught in an insufferable squeeze. They find certain items of food supplies and food supplies above price ceilings and price gougers.

"Therefore, the Executive Council urgently calls upon the Government to adopt the following program:

"1—Roll back prices of foodstuffs to the levels prevailing during the month of May, 1942.

"2—Keep prices at that level through the use of Government subsidies to farmers and distributors, if necessary.

"3—Restore to the President, on the May, 1942, standard of prices because wages have been tied to the cost of living then prevailing through the economic stabilization program. It is only fair that prices of food and wages be brought back into equitable relationship.

"The Executive Council endorses limited Government subsidies to restrain food price increases because that system has proved effective in practice in Great Britain where price control is an acknowledged success, even though it has not been accompanied by Government wage control.

"The Executive Council is convinced that a simple and final system of price ceilings is required to eliminate profiteering and to facilitate enforcement. This program is so clear-cut as to assure complete public understanding and universal compliance."

render it impossible for labor unions in those jurisdictions to function effectively and will interfere seriously with the efforts of war production workers to make their utmost contribution to victory.

"Those State laws are part of a sinister and underhanded attempt by Fascist influences in America to tear the trade union movement apart and to smash the economic and political strength of America's workers.

"Labor will resist these sniping attacks on the fundamental freedoms of labor through the power at its command and, if necessary, will undertake a wholesale housecleaning of reactionary members in the State Legislatures.

"The enemies of labor may as well realize that the trade union movement is not going to permit a return to the old days of exploitation of the workers but will press militantly for further progress and advancement after the war is won."

AFL MEMBERSHIP AGAIN BOOSTED TO NEW HIGH

Washington, D. C.—Secretary-Treasurer George Meany reported to the AFL Executive Council that the dues-paid membership in the Federation at the end of April stood at the all-time high total of 6,226,950.

The Council expressed gratification over this direct proof of the Federation's steady growth and directed that the AFL's organizing campaigns in various fields be continued unabated.